

CONTESTANTS IN THE KANSAS AGRICULTURAL JUDGING CONTESTS

by

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INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the 1960 decade the question was being asked by teachers and advisors throughout the United States whether the contests and award programs which had been used extensively in vocational agriculture courses and FFA activities were effective in training students enrolled in the vocational agricultural departments. Hemp, teacher educator at University of Illinois, stated that "probably no vocational field has depended so much on competitive activities to motivate and stimulate students as has the vocational group."¹

Hirshey, vocational agriculture instructor at Billings, Missouri, stated that many instructors at Missouri contests were asking several questions of importance to those training judging teams. These questions were:

Are contests worthwhile? How much emphasis should I place on FFA contests? How important is winning? How successful were you in determining the place of FFA contests in your vocational agricultural program?²

Because of the relationship of all agricultural teachers throughout the Central United States, it was assumed by the writer of this report that the same questions were being asked by the teachers of vocational agriculture in Kansas.

¹Paul E. Hemp, "Improving Contests and Award Programs in Vocational Agriculture," American Vocational Journal, 36:9 December, 1961.

²Kenneth Hirshey, "FFA Contest: How to Win One," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 33:224, April, 1961.

The Problem

Background for the study. In Kansas there were approximately 183 vocational agriculture departments with 191 instructors during the years of 1961-1965. Of these about 120 prepared judging teams for the state agricultural judging contests. At the time of this study there did not appear to be any information available on present or past Kansas winners.

It became a personal question of the author of this study as he watched young men train for team participation not only from his own classes but in neighboring schools as to whether contest winners were basically different than their peers who did not win in such contests.

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to make a status study of the Kansas winning contestants and one of their teammates in the five selected areas of contest work to (1) determine the approximate amount of training the contestants had in judging contests, (2) prepare a list of present and proposed vocations as to their relation to their competing area, (3) secure the contestant's evaluation of his training in judging contests for his present or proposed vocation, (4) compare the information of the winning contestant and a nonwinning teammate contestant, and (5) tabulate the winner and teammate as to location in the state at time of winning.

Definitions of Terms

This study involved the use of several terms which had unique meanings in relation to the study. These terms were given special

definitions as listed below. The definitions may or may not have had any special relationship to common usage definitions.

Animal husbandry judging - In animal husbandry judging, final placings were given on five classes of livestock with a class of beef, swine, and sheep being used for reason classes. The sixth class was a feeder calf selection class.³

Contestants - The term "contestants" was used to include both the winning contestant and his selected teammate.

Crops judging - The contest in crops judging included 100 samples of either grain crops, plant diseases, forage crops, or weeds to identify, six samples of grain crops to grade, and six samples of seed to analyze.⁴

Dairy science judging - Included in the dairy science judging was the competitive judging of six classes of dairy cows or dairy heifers with one class of cows serving as an oral reason class and two classes of cows serving as dairy placement classes.⁵

Horticulture judging - This area included the competitive judging in four classes chosen from fruits, nuts, vegetables, flowers or ornamental nursery stock and an identification section of twenty-five selections from the horticulture area.⁶

³Forty-Second Annual State High School Vocational Agriculture and Farm Mechanics Contest, A Bulletin prepared by the College Contest Committee, Kansas State University, p. 5.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 6.

Judging team - The judging team in the areas of poultry judging, crops judging, dairy science judging, and animal husbandry judging was composed of three from the same school. These individuals could not have competed on the state level in a judging area in which they had previously competed on the state level. The horticulture team was composed of two members with the same competitive restriction.⁷

Poultry judging - The area of poultry judging included eight classes. The first four classes were production classes. Classes five and six were dressed and live market birds. Classes seven and eight were interior and exterior of eggs.⁸

Teammate - In this report, the term "teammate" was defined as one of the judging team contestants from the same local chapter that competed on the state level with the winning contestant.

Winning contestant - The winning contestant was operationally defined for this report as the individual who placed the highest in the state judging contest on an individual basis.

Review of Literature

When considering the question of the value of judging contests in vocational agriculture programs, it was observed by the author that it is possible to find individuals who would take both sides of the question.

⁷Ibid., p. 1.

⁸Ibid., p. 4.

While Wilson stated that "Contests Must Go! They educate people away from a Christian democratic society,"⁹ Gray stated that "it seems that it is very obvious that FFA contests have been an asset to our program and that they can continue to benefit us."¹⁰

In most articles prepared which discussed the values of judging contests, the students, teachers, and teacher educators looked at both sides and took a stand about in the middle and stated their answer to the question - Are Vo Ag Contests Valuable to Participants - as Hemp did by stating, "Yes, but . . ."¹¹

Agricultural instructors have to continually explain to their beginning students how each contest is connected with farming. In explaining it to his students, Rice stated that the type of stimulation necessary for competition in judging contests carried over into farming programs of the boys and that if he was to select one area that has contributed the most to the growth of his chapter, he would point out the growth of their members through contests.¹²

⁹Bonard S. Wilson, "Contests Must Go!," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 30:196, March, 1958.

¹⁰Jarrel D. Gray, "Contests Have Value," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 30:197, March, 1958.

¹¹Paul E. Hemp, "Using Contests and Award Programs in Vocational Agriculture," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 35:136, January, 1963.

¹²David M. Rice, "The Place of Contests in the Vocational Agriculture Program," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 30:92, October, 1957.

Rice further stated:

the judging contests that we hold . . . serve as a stimulus necessary to train the boys on how to select the kind of livestock we want them to own. The boys who have the best record in our judging contests invariably have the best livestock at home.¹³

A study of the opinions of 500 senior vocational agriculture students was made by Hemp as a part of a broad study of contests and awards in Illinois. In this study, Hemp found that fewer than half of the senior students had participated in at least six of the seven areas included in the study.

This study also showed that students who had not participated in the seven contests rated these contests lower than did students who had participated and that in the areas of poultry judging, grain judging, and land judging those students who had participated two or more times gave lower ratings to those contests than did students who participated only once. The students who had won a contest award rated that respective contest higher than did students who had participated but had not won any awards; however the differences in ratings of the "winners" and "losers" were statistically significant in only two of the seven contests studied.¹⁴

While this study showed that the contests rated highest in educational value by the students were land judging, livestock judging,

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Hemp, op. cit., p. 137.

and dairy cattle judging, a similar study by Hemp answered by 100 vocational agriculture teachers showed that the State Farmer degrees, land use selection, livestock fairs, and public speaking contests were rated excellent or good by more than 75 per cent of the teachers. Less than half of the 100 teachers surveyed rated poultry judging, grain judging, meat judging, or dairy products judging contests as excellent or good in terms of educational value.¹⁵

In a study in Missouri, Warren said that it could be assumed that the contests were meeting some of the educational needs of the students but in many areas the contests were failing to meet the educational needs of these same students. The results of his survey showed that the subject matter content in five contests surveyed was included in the vocational agriculture curriculum and was available to all students enrolled.¹⁶

Hirshey summarized the views of a majority of the instructors writing on the subject when he stated:

(1) The FFA contest should be a means used to reach a teaching goal, not a goal in itself. (2) The FFA contest is an excellent motivating tool. (3) The period of time allotted for team training should be limited. (4) Team training should not interfere with the regular classroom schedule. . . . (5) Team training sessions cannot replace good classroom techniques of instructions.¹⁷

¹⁵Paul E. Hemp, "Improving Contests and Award Programs in Vocational Agriculture," American Vocational Journal, 36:9, December, 1961.

¹⁶Vincil Warren, "Educational Values of FFA Contests in Missouri," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 34:252, May, 1962.

¹⁷Kenneth Hirshey, "FFA Contests: How to Win One," The Agricultural Education Magazine, 33:224, April, 1961.

The trend of thought throughout most of the articles was that competition is a wonderful thing. This may be so because the writers agreed with Thomas Huxley who said, "the great end of life is not knowledge but action."¹⁸

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The data for this report was secured through the use of a questionnaire mailed to the state winning contestant and one of his selected teammates.

The questionnaire was divided into three general areas which were (1) determining the amount of training experience of each of the contestants sampled, (2) evaluation of training in a judging area toward preparing the individual for his present occupational status or educational training level, and (3) the relation of his winning area with his current or proposed vocation. A record check was made of the Kansas Future Farmer newsletters for the years involved, the secretary's minutes of the College Contest Committee, Kansas State University, and recorded placings of individuals and teams in the state agricultural judging contests.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to a state winning contestant and a selected teammate of his for the years 1961-1965 for each of four

¹⁸Thomas Huxley, Quoted in The Agricultural Education Magazine, 36:142, January, 1964.

selected areas—animal husbandry judging, crops judging, dairy science judging, and poultry judging--and for the years 1963-1965 for the area of horticulture judging. The area of horticulture judging competition on the state level started in 1963.

This study was further limited by the percentage of returns received and by the accuracy in which the contestants remembered and marked their responses.

Description of Contestants

Of the 48 individuals selected as contestants for this study, six were winning contestants and six were teammates in the area of livestock judging, five were winning contestants and five were teammates in each of the areas of dairy science judging, crops judging, and poultry judging, three were winning contestants and three were teammates in the area of horticulture judging. The teammates were selected as the one contestant which scored the lowest score for a member of their chapter's team for that respective year in the winning contestants area. The two additional contestants selected in the animal husbandry area were the result of a tie for high individual in that area in the year of 1964.

In each of the years and judging areas all teammates of the winning contestants were ranked in the top half of the total state contestants except in the year of 1964 in animal husbandry judging and the years of 1964 and 1965 in dairy science judging.

No team had all three of their members the same year in the Gold Emblem Group. The Gold Emblem group was composed of those members

placing in the top 10 per cent of all contestants in that area. There were several years where two members of the same team were in the Gold Emblem group.

A majority of the winning contestants were on teams placing first or second in the state contest. In ten of the twenty-four teams studied, the high individual in the state was a member of the first place team. In eight instances the high individual was a member of the second place team. In the area of poultry, agronomy, and horticulture each team with a winning contestant had placed fifth or higher. Only in the area of dairy science judging had the winning contestant not been on a first place team.

Of the seven contestants for which a reply was not received, one was in the armed forces and did not answer the questionnaire, two could not be located, and four received the questionnaire but did not reply. Three of the four who received the questionnaire but did not reply were in the area of dairy science judging.

In the area of horticulture and agronomy, one hundred per cent of the contestants responded. Ninety-one per cent of the livestock contestants replied and ninety per cent of those contestants selected in the poultry judging area responded. Fifty per cent of the dairy contestants responded to the questionnaire.

Forty-one per cent of those completing the questionnaire asked to receive a copy of the results.

The Data Received

The data with regard to the number of individuals included in each of the five selected contest areas were grouped and presented in Table I of this report. In a study of the data presented in Table I, it was noted that the areas of livestock and dairy science have almost as many contestants as the total of the other three. It was also noted that there did not appear to be a relationship between the year that each of the areas had their largest or smallest number of contestants entered even though three of the areas, dairy science, poultry and agronomy had their largest number of contestants in 1962. The table further showed that the number enrolled in the state horticulture contest had been small and had included a relatively constant number.

TABLE I
INDIVIDUALS IN CONTEST AREAS

	Livestock	Dairy Science	Poultry	Agronomy	Horticulture
	N	N	N	N	N
1961	270	246	144	84	--*
1962	250	260	170	116	--*
1963	248	200	132	64	32
1964	280	230	140	70	28
1965	272	240	144	90	37

*The first Horticulture contest on the state level was held in the spring of 1963.

A comparison was made of the number of contestants in Table I with the number of chapters given in Table II. It was indicated that the decrease in the number of full time chapters and/or part time chapters had not been in any relationship with the number of contestants entered on the state level.

TABLE II
DEPARTMENTS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
IN KANSAS

Year	Number
1961	196
1962	190
1963	188
1964	185
1965	184

It was noted by further comparison of the two tables that for the five years selected, forty-five per cent of the departments sent on the average of one team to compete in livestock judging. The average for the other areas was forty-one per cent for dairy science, twenty-five per cent for poultry judging, fifteen per cent for agronomy judging and nine per cent for horticulture judging.

In the area of livestock judging in the year of 1964 more than one-half of the chapters sent a judging team to compete in one or more areas on the state level. The year which had the lowest percentage of

chapters sending a judging team to compete in the four major areas--livestock, dairy science, poultry, and agronomy--was in 1963.

In Table III it shows that sixty-eight per cent of the winning contestants had completed college or were enrolled in college working for a degree. Seventy-three per cent of their teammates were in the same educational category. It was noted by a breakdown of Table III that in the area of livestock judging there were one hundred per cent of the contestants who responded and had either completed or were working on a college degree.

TABLE III
LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Level	Winning Contestant	Teammate
Less than a high school degree	2	2
High school graduate	1	3
Trade school above the high school level	0	1
Completed 2 years or less of college, not continuing	3	0
Completed 3 or more years of college, not continuing for a degree	0	0
Completed a college degree	1	2
Enrolled in college, working on degree	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>
Total number	19	22

Of the contestants who had completed two years or less of college and were not planning to continue for a degree, two were in the area of agronomy and the other one was in poultry judging. The winning horticulture judging contestants and their teammates for the years of 1964 and 1965 were still enrolled in high school and thus had less than a high school degree at the time of completing the questionnaire. The only contestant who was enrolled in a trade school or who had completed a trade school above the high school level was a teammate in the area of dairy science.

Table IV showed that over eighty-six per cent of the teammates planned to complete a college degree and seventy-three per cent of the winning contestants planned to do so. Both of the groups had approximately sixty-three per cent of the respondents enrolled in college at the time of the study. Fifteen per cent of the winning contestants and nine per cent of the teammates did not plan any further formal education. Although there were not any winning contestants enrolled in a trade school at the time of the study, there were two who planned to become trade school graduates. There were no contestants who planned to become junior college graduates and not go on to complete a degree.

Of those contestants enrolled in school, four were completing work for a high school diploma, twenty-six were working for a bachelor's degree, two were working on advanced college degrees, and one on completing work necessary to receive his trade school certificate. As listed in Table V, over seventy-one per cent of the winning contestants

TABLE IV
EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Educational Plans	Winning Contestant	Teammate
No further formal education planned	3	2
Trade school graduate	2	1
Junior college graduate only	0	0
College degree	<u>14</u>	<u>19</u>
Total number	19	22

TABLE V
AREA OF SCHOOLING OF THOSE IN SCHOOL

Area	Winning Contestant	Teammate
Trade occupation	0	1
Ranching or farming	5	5
Office personnel	0	1
Professional employment	4	5
Agricultural related occupation	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Total number	14	18

and over sixty-one per cent of their teammates were enrolled in school in an area to prepare them for ranching or farming or an agricultural related occupation. Approximately twenty-eight per cent of both groups were preparing for professional employment. Two contestants checked two items as to their area of school. Both of these contestants were placed in the professional employment group as their choices were for professional employment but eventually full time ranching or farming.

There was a total of thirteen contestants employed full time and twelve employed part time. Of those indicating full-time employment, two winning contestants and one teammate were also enrolled in school with the two winning contestants being enrolled in college and the teammate enrolled in a trade school.

TABLE VI
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF CONTESTANTS

Occupational Area		Winning Contestant	Teammate
Trade occupation	Part time	0	0
	Full time	2	2
Ranching or farming	Part time	4	5
	Full time	3	1
Office personnel	Part time	0	0
	Full time	0	0
Professional employment	Part time	0	1
	Full time	1	3
Agricultural related	Part time	1	1
	Full time	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	Part time	5	7
	Full time	7	6

All twelve of the part-time employed were full-time students. All of those employed in the agricultural related area were state contestants or teammates judging in agronomy. All of these were employed in an area directly related to agronomy judging. All of the state contestants who judged in the livestock area and were employed were working either as self-employed or employees in the ranching or farming area. Five of the eight members who were selected for poultry judging and were employed were working in the area of ranching or farming or professional employment in the area of poultry management.

Of those employed at the time of the study about one-half of both the winning contestants and their selected teammates would have liked to remain in the same occupational area. This information as listed in Table VII included both those working full or part-time.

TABLE VII
PRESENT OCCUPATIONAL AREA COMPARED
TO FUTURE DESIRES

	Winning Contestant	Teammate
Not presently employed	7	9
Would like to remain in the same occupational area	6	6
Would like to change to another occupational area	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
Total number	19	22

Of the six winning contestants who desired to change occupations, two of them planned to change to full-time ranching or farming, and three to agricultural related occupations. Of the seven teammates who desired to change, two planned to change to either ranching or farming or an agricultural related occupation. Three planned to change to professional employment not related to agriculture. Both groups had one individual who planned to change to the field of carpentry.

The average number of judging areas entered per contestant on the state level was almost the same for both groups as the winning contestants averaged 2.9 areas and the teammates averaged 3.0 areas. Table VIII showed that the winning contestant in the areas of horticulture and agronomy entered, on the average, more contests than their teammates while in the areas of dairy cattle and poultry the teammates entered on the average more contests than the winning contestants. Both of the winning contestants and teammates in livestock judging averaged 2.6 contests entered.

The winning contestants in the area of agronomy had the highest average--four contests entered per contestant--of any group studied. Only two individuals, one a teammate in dairy cattle and a winning contestant in horticulture, entered as many as six contests on the state level.

Table IX showed that in all areas the majority of winning contestants had three or less years of training as did the majority of teammates in the areas of poultry judging, agronomy judging, and horticulture judging. The majority of teammates in the livestock judging

TABLE VIII
NUMBER OF CONTESTS ENTERED ON THE
STATE LEVEL

Judging Area		Number					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Dairy cattle	teammate	0	1	1	0	0	1
	winning contestant	0	2	0	0	0	0
Livestock	teammate	2	0	3	0	1	0
	winning contestant	2	0	1	2	0	0
Poultry	teammate	1	1	0	2	1	0
	winning contestant	1	0	3	0	0	0
Agronomy	teammate	0	1	1	2	1	0
	winning contestant	0	0	0	5	0	0
Horticulture	teammate	2	0	0	1	0	0
	winning contestant	1	1	0	0	0	1
Total number	teammate	5	3	5	5	3	1
	winning contestant	4	3	4	7	0	1

TABLE IX
YEARS OF TRAINING IN ALL AREAS

Judging Area		Number					
		1	2	3	4	5	over 5
Livestock	teammate	0	2	6	5	0	4
	winning contestant	0	5	6	6	0	2
Dairy cattle	teammate	2	3	2	6	0	5
	winning contestant	0	8	4	2	1	4
Poultry	teammate	4	5	5	2	0	1
	winning contestant	3	4	6	4	0	0
Agronomy	teammate	2	6	0	3	0	1
	winning contestant	3	3	3	4	0	1
Horticulture	teammate	6	0	1	1	0	0
	winning contestant	7	1	0	1	0	0
Total number	teammate	14	16	14	17	0	11
	winning contestant	13	21	19	17	1	7

and dairy science judging areas had more than three years of judging training in their respective areas.

Table IX included the years of training for all areas in which the respondents entered on the state level. It showed that of the forty-two respondents, thirty-six entered livestock and dairy cattle judging, thirty-four poultry judging, twenty-six agronomy judging, and seventeen horticulture judging.

Table X broke down the data in Table IX and recorded only the years of training in the area in which each winning contestant and teammate was selected.

TABLE X
YEARS OF TRAINING IN SELECTED AREAS

Judging Area		Number					
		1	2	3	4	5	over 5
Livestock	teammate	0	1	3	1	0	1
	winning contestant	0	1	0	2	0	2
Dairy cattle	teammate	1	0	0	1	0	1
	winning contestant	0	0	0	0	1	1
Poultry	teammate	1	0	2	2	0	0
	winning contestant	0	1	1	2	0	0
Agronomy	teammate	0	2	0	2	0	1
	winning contestant	0	1	1	3	0	0
Horticulture	teammate	3	0	0	0	0	0
	winning contestant	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total number	teammate	5	3	5	6	0	3
	winning contestant	3	3	2	7	1	3

A comparison of Tables IX and X showed that forty per cent of the livestock winning contestants had five or more years of training while the average for all contestants who entered this area was sixteen per cent. Fifty per cent of the dairy-winning contestants had five or more years of training with the average for all contestants judging dairy cattle twenty-five per cent. Twenty per cent of the agronomy winning contestants had five or more years of training as compared to sixteen per cent of those contestants judging agronomy. In the area of poultry judging the winning contestants had a lower average than the average of all contestants as the winning contestants did not have anyone training five or more years. Five per cent of all contestants had five or more years of training. In the area of horticulture judging, four contestants had over one year of training and there were not any winning contestants or teammate of theirs who had over one year.

Included in Table XI were the hours of training of all contestants in the selected areas. Table XII included only the winning contestant and his teammate in the area in which the winning contestant was the high individual on the state level.

In general all of the winning contestants spent more hours in training for judging activities in all areas in which they were state winners than in other areas of judging. They also spent more hours training than their teammates.

In livestock judging, sixty-six per cent of the contestants had over forty hours of training with twenty per cent having twenty or less hours. The livestock winning contestants, as indicated in Table XII,

TABLE XI
HOURS OF TRAINING

Judging Area		Number				
		0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	Over 40
Livestock	teammate	2	5	1	1	11
	winning contestant	0	1	2	2	15
Dairy cattle	teammate	3	3	4	4	5
	winning contestant	0	7	3	2	7
Poultry	teammate	6	5	3	4	3
	winning contestant	2	2	2	3	8
Agronomy	teammate	1	3	3	0	6
	winning contestant	1	2	3	1	8
Horticulture	teammate	3	3	3	0	1
	winning contestant	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	teammate	15	19	14	9	26
	winning contestant	5	13	12	9	41

TABLE XII
HOURS OF TRAINING IN SELECTED AREAS

Judging Area		Number				
		0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	Over 40
Livestock	teammate	0	1	0	0	5
	winning contestant	0	0	0	0	5
Dairy cattle	teammate	0	1	1	0	1
	winning contestant	0	0	0	0	2
Poultry	teammate	1	1	0	1	2
	winning contestant	0	1	0	1	2
Agronomy	teammate	0	0	1	0	4
	winning contestant	0	0	0	0	5
Horticulture	teammate	0	1	2	0	0
	winning contestant	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	teammate	1	4	4	1	12
	winning contestant	1	2	0	1	15

had one hundred per cent and their teammates eighty-four per cent receiving over forty hours of training. Only sixteen per cent of the livestock judging teammates had twenty hours or less.

Although Table XI showed that only thirty-one per cent of the contestants judging dairy cattle had over forty hours of training, thirty-three per cent had twenty or less hours. One hundred per cent of the winning contestants in dairy cattle judging had over forty hours of training as did thirty-three per cent of their teammates.

Fifty per cent of the winning contestants in poultry judging had over forty hours of training as did twenty-nine per cent of the total contestants. Of the contestants judging in agronomy, fifty per cent had over forty hours of training; one hundred per cent of the winning contestants and eighty per cent of their teammates had over forty hours. While twenty-five per cent of the total contestants had less than twenty hours, there was not any of the teammates which trained less than twenty hours.

Although those contestants who entered the horticulture area had the lowest percentage training over forty hours than any of the areas there were twenty-one per cent of the contestants and thirty-three per cent of the winning contestants who did. There was seventy-eight and eight tenths per cent of all the winning contestants training over forty hours as compared to an overall average of all contestants of forty-one and two tenths per cent.

In two areas, livestock and dairy cattle, contestants competed in as many as sixteen judging contests prior to entering the state

contests. Of the five contestants who competed in over twenty contests before competing on the state level, three were high individuals in livestock judging and one was the high individual in dairy cattle judging.

In the areas of dairy cattle and horticulture the winning contestants entered the state contest without competing in a prior contest. One-third of the high individuals in dairy cattle and none of the high individuals in horticulture had competed in a prior contest in an area in which they won on the state level.

The majority of the contestants competed in from one to ten contests before competing on the state level. Of this majority Table XIII shows that almost two-thirds of these competed in only one to five contests.

TABLE XIII
JUDGING CONTESTS COMPETED IN PRIOR
TO STATE CONTESTS

Judging Area		Number					
		0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Over 20
Livestock	teammate	0	5	6	2	3	0
	winning contestant	0	2	7	4	0	3
Dairy cattle	teammate	1	8	4	7	0	1
	winning contestant	1	9	2	0	2	1
Poultry	teammate	0	14	1	0	0	0
	winning contestant	0	13	3	1	0	0
Agronomy	teammate	1	7	2	2	0	0
	winning contestant	0	6	2	0	0	0
Horticulture	teammate	2	4	0	0	0	0
	winning contestant	3	1	0	0	0	0
Total number	teammate	4	38	13	11	3	1
	winning contestant	4	31	14	5	2	4

The winning contestants in livestock and dairy cattle averaged a higher number of contests competed in prior to the state contest than did their teammates or other contestants who entered these areas. In those judging poultry, agronomy, and horticulture those competing but not placing first in the state had a higher average of contests competed in than the winning contestants.

It was noted in Table XIV that over eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and over eighty per cent of the teammates were in their twelfth grade at the time that they competed in the state judging contest.

TABLE XIV
CLASS LEVEL AT TIME OF COMPETING
IN STATE CONTEST

Judging Area		Class level		
		10	11	12
Livestock	teammate	1	1	13
	winning contestant	1	0	13
Dairy cattle	teammate	0	2	12
	winning contestant	0	1	13
Poultry	teammate	0	2	13
	winning contestant	0	0	13
Agronomy	teammate	0	1	8
	winning contestant	0	2	9
Horticulture	teammate	0	3	4
	winning contestant	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	teammate	1	9	50
	winning contestant	3	5	49

This high per cent of contestants being in the 12th class level was fairly consistent in all areas of judging except horticulture. In horticulture judging only about forty per cent of the contestants were in the twelfth grade.

Table XV shows that in the areas in which they were the high individuals, that seventy-three per cent of the winning contestants and sixty-eight of their teammates were in the twelfth grade level.

TABLE XV
CLASS LEVEL AT TIME OF COMPETING IN STATE
CONTEST IN SELECTED AREA

Judging Area		Class level		
		10	11	12
Livestock	teammate	1	0	5
	winning contestant	1	0	4
Dairy cattle	teammate	0	1	2
	winning contestant	0	0	2
Poultry	teammate	0	1	4
	winning contestant	0	1	3
Agronomy	teammate	0	1	4
	winning contestant	0	0	5
Horticulture	teammate	0	3	0
	winning contestant	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	teammate	1	6	15
	winning contestant	3	2	14

Of the four contestants shown in Table XV as competing on the state level, as a 10th grader, all were in the areas of livestock or horticulture. Table XV showed that seventy-five per cent of these were high individuals in the state for that year.

It was further noted in Table XV, in the areas of dairy cattle and agronomy, that all of the winning contestants were twelfth graders while none of the winning contestants were in horticulture judging.

In Table XVI was included the ratings of the contestants in all the areas in which they competed in on the state level. Where the previous tables had been concerned with the contestants judging on the state level, Tables XVI and XVII were concerned with ratings of contests competed in on district or higher level.

TABLE XVI
RATING OF CONTEST

Judging Area		Rating Level		
		Very High	Medium	Very Low
Livestock	teammate	14	5	0
	winning contestant	13	6	0
Dairy cattle	teammate	5	9	4
	winning contestant	7	7	1
Poultry	teammate	7	6	4
	winning contestant	6	9	0
Agronomy	teammate	7	2	1
	winning contestant	11	1	0
Horticulture	teammate	6	0	0
	winning contestant	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	teammate	39	22	9
	winning contestant	42	25	1

TABLE XVII
RATING OF CONTESTS IN SELECTED AREAS

Judging Area		Rating Level		
		Very High	Medium	Very Low
Livestock	teammate	6	0	0
	winning contestant	5	0	0
Dairy cattle	teammate	2	1	0
	winning contestant	2	0	0
Poultry	teammate	3	1	1
	winning contestant	2	2	0
Agronomy	teammate	5	0	0
	winning contestant	5	0	0
Horticulture	teammate	3	0	0
	winning contestant	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	teammate	19	2	1
	winning contestant	17	2	0

In the area of dairy cattle alone did a winning contestant rate any contest very low? Sixty-one per cent of the contestants that were rated as the high individual in a selected area rated all contests in which they judged as very high. They had one per cent of their group rate any contest very low. The teammates rated fifty-five per cent of all contests as very high. Twelve per cent of the teammates rated a contest as very low. A check of the questionnaires showed there was not a contestant who rated a contest as very high who also rated a contest as very low.

As indicated in Table XVII, all of the winning contestants and their teammates in the areas of livestock, agronomy, and horticulture judging rated that area as to value as very high. There was not any

winning contestants who rated the contest in which they placed first as very low. There was one teammate of a winning contestant who rated the training as very low in the area in which his teammate placed first in the state.

In marking the section of their questionnaire as pertained to Table XVIII, the contestants were instructed that they could mark as many factors as they desired. The contestants averaged marking one and one-half factors. Three of the winning contestants indicated that none of the choices fitted their situation. One additional winning contestant answered the question that he had not chosen an occupation at the time of completing the questionnaire.

TABLE XVIII
HOW TRAINING IN JUDGING HELPED PREPARE
FOR CHOSEN OCCUPATION

Item	Winning Contestants	Teammate
Provided background material only	6	6
Provided interest into occupational area only	4	11
Provided necessary technical knowledge to start in an occupation	7	5
Provided necessary leadership training	14	9
None of these	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	34	31

The area marked most consistent by the winning contestant was that the training provided necessary leadership training. This item was marked by seventy-three per cent of the group. Forty per cent of their teammates marked this factor. The factor marked most by the teammates was that their judging training provided interest into an occupational area only. This factor was marked by fifty per cent of the teammates but was the lowest factor selected by the winning contestants.

In Table XIX the contestants were asked to indicate their first and second choices that provided most of their judging experiences.

TABLE XIX
AREAS WHICH PROVIDED JUDGING EXPERIENCES

Areas	Winning Contestant Choice		Teammate Choice	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
FFA or high school vocational agriculture classes	16	3	19	2
L-H training	1	5	1	4
Personal showmanship training experiences	0	2	1	4
Attendance at district, county or state shows	1	7	1	8
Parents	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	19	19	22	21

It was noted in Table XIX that eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and eighty-six of their teammates marked their first choice as the FFA or high school vocational agriculture classes. It was further noted that all of the contestants except one marked this area as either their first or second choice. The area marked as the leading second choice was attendance at district, county or state shows.

The contestants in Table XX were asked to mark their first and second choices of those influencing their decision in choosing a vocation. This vocation in many cases was not the one in which they were employed at the time of the study but their future proposed vocation.

TABLE XX
ITEMS MARKED WHICH INFLUENCED PROPOSED VOCATION

Item	Winning Contestant Choice		Teammate Choice	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Guidance counselor	0	1	1	1
Parent	3	4	4	5
Teacher	9	4	7	8
Athletics	0	0	2	0
FFA judging activities	2	4	2	5
Other	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	19	19	22	22

Table XX showed that the factor marked most as first choice by both the winning contestants and their teammates was the teacher. Of the teacher marked sixteen times as first choice, the vocational agriculture teacher was specified as the teacher thirteen times and the biology teacher, history teacher, and agronomy teacher once each. Of the teacher marked as second choice on twelve questionnaires, the vocational agriculture teacher was indicated eleven times and the business teacher once. Of the twenty choices marked as other, personal friends and the contestants own personal decision were listed most. The area of agronomy judging had one-half of their choices which indicated the FFA judging activities. Of the seventeen contestants who marked their parents as either first or second choices, nine were in the area of livestock judging. Two of the three contestants marking the guidance counselor as their first or second choice judged in the area of poultry.

The state of Kansas was divided into seven districts for competition of vocational agriculture and FFA activities. These districts were the northwest, southwest, south central, north central, southeast, northeast, and east central. These districts were originally established on a population basis. They cover a territory from nine counties in the northeast district to twenty-four counties in the southwest district. In Table XXI each of the chapters which furnished the winning contestant in each of the areas was located by FFA district. It was noted by this table that two of the districts, the southwest and the northeast, had not had a winning contestant from their district for the years selected.

TABLE XXI
LOCATION OF CHAPTERS FURNISHING
WINNING CONTESTANTS

Judging Area	District						
	SW	NW	SC	NC	SE	NE	EC
Livestock	0	2	1	1	2	0	0
Dairy cattle	0	0	1	0	3	0	1
Poultry	0	1	0	1	3	0	0
Agronomy	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
Horticulture	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	0	3	2	5	13	0	1

The southeast district furnished thirteen of the twenty-four teams which was over fifty-four per cent of the chapters which furnished a winning contestant. In the areas of dairy cattle judging, poultry judging, and agronomy judging, the southeast district furnished more winning contestants than the total of the other districts. In the area of livestock judging the northwest district and the southeast district each furnished two winning contestants.

At the end of the questionnaire each contestant was given the opportunity to discuss by general comments how participation in judging activities had helped the contestant. Thirty-seven of the forty-two contestants added items of discussion.

The overall comments were about the same among the contestants irregardless of area of competition. The most used comment was in

regard to developing one's own abilities. One livestock contestant stated it as "an opportunity to develop confidence in myself" while another contestant said that "it helped me to remove the fear of stating my own opinions. Contestants in all areas stated that it "gave me an opportunity to learn to express myself" or that "it improved my ability to meet and speak to people."

A majority of the contestants stated that their judging experiences "has shown that a little extra work will bring big returns." This same general idea was expressed by several who stated that "judging stimulated my thinking to analyze a problem and fully consider the question before making a decision."

A winning contestant summed up most other contestants views when he wrote that "participating has given me the desire to accomplish to my best every task by using my natural abilities even amidst much distraction."

SUMMARY

It was observed by the author of this study that when considering the question of the value of judging contests in vocational agriculture programs that it was possible to find individuals who will take both sides of the question.

Although there had not been an extensive coverage of the subjects in the current magazines or trade publications, it appeared that most of the students, teachers, and teacher educators who expressed themselves

were in favor of the competitive contests in vocational agriculture but with some reservations.

These reservations seemed to be that the results of the contests are fine but the training for these should not replace a good sound curriculum being covered in the vocational agriculture classes or the leaving out of some students training to spend extra time with those who are representing their chapter in the contest.

A study by Hemp, teacher educator in Illinois, showed that the five hundred students in his study expressed the opinion that the contests of the most value to them were land judging, livestock judging, and dairy cattle. The teachers of the students rated State Farmer Degrees, land use selection, livestock fairs, and public speaking contests as the highest.

The data for this report was secured through the use of a questionnaire mailed to the state winning contestant and a selected teammate of his in five areas. The areas were livestock judging, dairy cattle judging, poultry judging and agronomy judging for the years of 1961-1965 and horticulture judging for the years of 1963-1965. Additional information was secured by a record check of the Kansas Future Farmer newsletter, the secretary's minutes of the College Contest Committee, and recorded placings of individuals and teams in the state agricultural judging contests.

Of the forty-eight individuals selected as contestants, forty-one of these responded. Of the seven who did not reply, one was in the

armed forces, two could not be located, and four received the questionnaire and did not return it. Three of the four who received the questionnaire but did not reply were in the area of dairy science judging.

There did not appear to be any relationship between the number of contestants on the state level and the number of chapters sending a team to the state contest. Although the number of departments in Kansas dropped from 196 in 1961 to 184 in 1964, the number of teams entering the state contests in 1961 was 744 compared to 746 in 1965.

Sixty-eight per cent of the winning contestants and seventy-three per cent of their teammates were enrolled in college, were working on a degree, or had completed work on their degree at the time of the study. Those responding from the area of livestock judging were one hundred per cent in college or had completed their degree. Four of the contestants were still in high school, having competed on the state level during their tenth grade year in high school. Seventy-three per cent of the winning contestants and over eighty per cent of their teammates planned on completing a college degree.

Over seventy-one per cent of the winning contestants and over sixty-one per cent of their teammates who were in school were in an area to prepare them for either ranching or farming or an agricultural related occupation. Approximately twenty-eight per cent of both groups were preparing for professional employment.

Of the thirteen contestants employed full time and the twelve employed part time at the time of the study, about one-half were in the area of occupation in which they would like to remain. All twelve of the part time employed were full time students.

The average number of judging areas entered per contestant on the state level was almost the same for both the winning contestants who averaged 2.9 areas and their teammates who averaged 3.0 areas. The winning contestants in the area of agronomy had the highest average of any group with four contests entered per contestant.

Overall the teammates of the winning contestants had more years of training than did the winning contestants although the difference was small. The results further showed though that the winning contestants had more years of training in the areas in which they were the high individual in the state than in those areas in which they were not the winning contestant. Those entering the livestock judging area had the most years of training with the dairy cattle contestants being second.

In general, all of the winning contestants spent more hours training for judging activities than did their teammates. The winning contestants in dairy cattle judging spent the most hours with each spending over forty hours in training. Twenty-five per cent of the contestants indicated that they spent less than twenty hours in training for each area of judging.

The winning contestants in livestock and dairy cattle had a higher average of number of contests competed in on the district or

area level than did their teammates. In the other areas of poultry, agronomy, and horticulture, the teammates averaged competing in more contests than did the winning contestants. The majority of the contestants had competed in ten or less contests prior to entering the state contest.

Over eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and eighty per cent of their teammates were in the twelfth grade at the time of competing on the state level. This high per cent was fairly consistent in all areas of judging except horticulture.

Sixty-one per cent of the contestants that were high individuals rated the value of the contest in which they won as very high. Only one per cent of these winning contestants rated the contest as very low. Their teammates rated fifty-five per cent as very high and twelve per cent as very low. All of the winning contestants and their teammates in the areas of livestock, agronomy, and horticulture judging rated their area as very high. Those who ranked a contest as very low was not either a winning contestant in that area or a teammate of a winning contestant in that area.

In determining how their training experiences helped them in preparing for their chosen vocation, the area marked most consistent by the winning contestants was that it provided necessary leadership training. The factor marked most by their teammates but least by the winning contestants was that it provided interest into an occupational area only.

The FFA or high school vocational agricultural classes were the leading area in providing experiences in judging activities. This area was marked as the first choice of eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and eighty-six per cent of their teammates. All contestants except one marked this area as either their first or second choice. The area marked as the leading second choice of the contestants was attendance at district, county, or state shows.

The most influencing factor in helping the contestants choose their proposed vocation was their high school teachers, with the vocational agriculture teacher being named most. The second leading factor was personal friends and the contestants own decision.

Of the seven FFA districts in Kansas over one-half of the winning contestant and their teammates came from the southeast district. Two districts, the southwest and the northwest, did not have any winning contestants from their districts.

When asked at the end of the questionnaire to discuss how participation in judging activities had helped the contestants the overall comments were about the same from contestants in all of the areas of judging. The most common comments were that "it gave me an opportunity to develop confidence in myself," "to learn to express myself," and that "it has shown that a little extra work will bring big returns."

A winning contestant summed up most of the comments of other contestants when he wrote that "participating has given me the desire to accomplish to the best my every task by using my natural abilities even amidst much distraction."

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APPENDIX

RETURN TO: Ralph Field
208 E. 5th
Caney, Kansas

A STUDY OF THE KANSAS WINNING CONTESTANT IN
FIVE MAJOR AREAS IN THE STATE AGRICULTURE
JUDGING CONTESTS FOR THE YEARS 1961-65

INSTRUCTIONS: Unless otherwise indicated, place a check () in the blank to the left of each statement which most correctly answers or completes the statement. In many of the questions you are asked to specify the particular job or job level in addition to checking your choice of answer.

I. What level of education have you completed?

- ☐ A. Less than a high school degree.
- ☐ B. High school graduate.
- ☐ C. Trade school above the high school level.
- ☐ D. Enrolled in college and working toward a degree.
- ☐ E. Completed 2 years or less of college and not continuing.
- ☐ F. Completed 3 or more years of college and not continuing to complete a degree.
- ☐ G. Completed a B.S. or higher degree.

II. If you are presently in school, what area of employment are you preparing for?

- ☐ A. Trade occupation:
Specify job area: _____
- ☐ B. Ranching or Farming:
Specify job area: _____
- ☐ C. Office Personnel:
Specify job area: _____
- ☐ D. Professional employment:
Specify job area: _____
- ☐ E. Agricultural Related Occupation:
Specify job area: _____

III. What are your future plans as concerning your educational training in a formal school?

- ☐ A. No further formal education planned.
- ☐ B. Trade school graduate.
- ☐ C. Junior college graduate only.
- ☐ D. College degree.

IV. If employed, either as an employed person or self employed, what is your present occupational status?

- ___ A. Trade occupation:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ B. Ranching or farming:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ C. Office personnel:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ D. Professional employment:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ E. Agricultural related occupation:
Specify job area: _____

V. Are you now working in the occupational area that you would like to remain in for the next 10 years?

- ___ A. Not presently employed.
- ___ B. Would like to remain in the same area.
- ___ C. Would like to change to another occupational area.

VI. If you plan a change of employment in the next 10 years, to which area do you plan to change?

- ___ Trade occupational area:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ Ranching or farming:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ Office Personnel:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ Professional employment:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ Agricultural related occupation:
Specify job area: _____

VII. If you are in the armed forces, what are your future plans?

- ___ A. Remaining in the armed forces as a career:
Specify job assignment: _____
- ___ B. Attendance at college or university:
Specify training area: _____
- ___ C. Farm or ranch:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ D. Attend technical trade school:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ E. Work in trade area:
Specify job area: _____
- ___ F. Work in agricultural related occupation:
Specify job area: _____

- VIII. Check the answer for each of the areas in which you judged that most accurately gives the number of hours of training for judging activities in that area.

Hours	Judging area						
	Live- stock	Dairy Cattle	Poultry	Agronomy	Horti- culture	Other	Other
0-10	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
10-20	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
20-30	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
30-40	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Over 40	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

- IX. Check the answer that most accurately fits the class level at the time that you competed in the state judging contest for those areas in which you competed on the state level.

Class level	Judging area						
	Live- stock	Dairy Cattle	Poultry	Agronomy	Horti- culture	Other	Other
10th	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
11th	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
12th	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

- X. Check the answer that most accurately gives the number of years of training for the judging activities in that area.

Years	Judging Area						
	Live- stock	Dairy Cattle	Poultry	Agronomy	Horti- culture	Other	Other
1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
4	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
5	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Over 5	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

- XI. Check the number of judging contests competed in for each area prior to entering the state contests.

Number	Judging Area						
	Live- stock	Dairy Cattle	Poultry	Agronomy	Horti- culture	Other	Other
1- 5	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
6-10	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
11-15	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
16-20	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Over 20:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
None	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

- XII. Rate each of the contest areas in which you have competed on the district or higher level as to their educational value.

Level	Judging Area						
	Live- stock	Dairy Cattle	Poultry	Agronomy	Horti- culture	Other	Other
Very High	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Medium	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Very Low	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

- XIII. Check the item or items in which you consider your training in judging has helped you in preparing you for your chosen occupation. (More than one may be checked)

- ☐ A. Provided background material only.
☐ B. Provided interest into occupational area only.
☐ C. Provided necessary technical knowledge to start in occupation.
☐ D. Provided necessary leadership training.
☐ E. None of these.

- XIV. Indicate your first and second choice of the areas listed that provided most of your judging experiences by marking a one (1) in front of your first choice and a two (2) in front of your second choice.

- ☐ A. FFA or high school vocational agriculture classes.
☐ B. 4-H training.

- ___ C. Personal showmanship training experiences.
- ___ D. Attendance at district, county, or state shows.
- ___ E. Parents.

XV. Indicate your first and second choice that had the most influence in helping you to chose your present proposed vocation by marking a one (1) in front of your first choice and a two (2) in front of your second choice.

- ___ A. Guidance counselor.
- ___ B. Parent.
- ___ C. Teacher (Specify teaching field: _____)
- ___ D. Athletics.
- ___ E. FFA judging activities.
- ___ F. Other: specify _____

XVI. General Comments: Discuss below how participation has helped you in other fields of endeavor. (Example: confidence to use natural abilities, improve ability to organize, improve ability to analyze a problem, etc.)

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

XVII. Please give your name and your current address. If this address is different than your school address list both address and indicate each.

CONTESTANTS IN THE KANSAS AGRICULTURAL JUDGING CONTESTS

by

RALPH GLENN FIELD

B.S., Kansas State University, 1950

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1966

The purpose of this study was to make a status study of selected contestants to (1) determine the training of the contestants, (2) secure the contestant's evaluation of judging contests, (3) compare the information from the winning contestant and a teammate, and (4) tabulate the winner by FFA districts.

The data for this report was secured through the use of a questionnaire mailed to the state winning contestant and a teammate of his in five areas - livestock, dairy cattle, poultry, and agronomy for the years 1961-65 and horticulture for the years 1963-65. Record checks were made of the minutes of the College Contest Committee and state contest records.

In reviewing the literature it appeared that most of those writing on the subject expressed themselves in favor of the competitive contests in vocational agriculture but with some reservation. The main reservation was that the training for the contests should not replace a sound curriculum in the vocational agriculture classes.

Of the forty-eight individuals selected, forty-one responded. Two could not be located and five did not reply. There did not appear to be any relationship in the number of contestants and the number of chapters competing.

Sixty-eight per cent of the winning contestants and seventy-three per cent of their teammates were in college working on a degree or had completed their degree. Of these, seventy-one per cent of the winning contestants and sixty-seven per cent of their teammates were preparing for ranching, farming or an agricultural related occupation.

The winning contestants averaged entering 2.9 areas on the state level and their teammates 3.0 areas. The teammates had more years of training but less hours of training in each judging area than the winning contestants. Those competing in livestock judging had the most years of training but those in dairy cattle judging had the most hours in training.

Over eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and eighty per cent of the teammates were in the twelfth grade at the time of competing on the state level.

Sixty-one per cent of the contestants rated the value of the contests in which they judged as very high. Only one per cent of the winning contestants and twelve per cent of their teammates rated any contest as very low.

The area marked most by the winning contestants in determining how their training experience helped them prepare for a vocation was that it provided necessary leadership training. The FFA or high school vocational agriculture classes were the leading area in providing these experiences with judging activities being marked as the first choice of eighty-four per cent of the winning contestants and eighty-six per cent of their teammates. The most influencing factor in helping the contestants choose their proposed vocation was their teachers with the vocational agriculture teacher being named most.

Of the seven FFA districts in Kansas, over one-half of the winning contestants came from the southeast district. Two of the districts did not have any winning contestants.

When asked to discuss how participation in judging had helped them, all but four replied. A winning contestant summed up most of the comments when he wrote that, "participating has given me the desire to accomplish to my best every task by using my natural abilities even amidst much distraction."